STUDENT ESSAY

THE ARMY OF EXCELLENCE AND THE DIVISION SUPPORT COMMAND

BY

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THE ARMY OF EXCELLENCE AND THE DIVISION SUPPORT COMMAND

INDIVIDUAL ESSAY

by

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ABSTRACT

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THE ARMY OF EXCELLENCE AND THE DIVISION SUPPORT COMMAND

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The intent of this essay is to explore some of the advantages of the Army of Excellence (AOE) in the division support command (DISCOM) of a heavy division. Additionally, it will compare these to DIVISION '86 and "H-Series" TOE's, examine some AOE impacts and offer suggestions on what commanders can do to lessen these impacts. There are a myriad of subjects that could be discussed about the AOE and the DISCOM. I have tried to limit this essay to the important AOE issues or problems that a commander can reasonably expect to influence. As such, I will address some of the general reduc. ons and consolidations in the AOE DISCOM, some of the key topics in supply and maintenance operations and conclude with rear area operations. Before discussing these subjects, I want to provide some background about my natural bias toward the field.

My recent field positions involved executing, providing input and trying to make changes to the AOE. During the last six years I have served back to back assignments in two different mechanized infantry divisions in CONUS an' USAREUR. My job positions in order were as follows: DMMC Commander; Assistant Chief of Staff, G4; Deputy Chief of Staff and a Supply and Transport Battalion Commander (under "H-Series", DIVISION '86 and AOE MTOE's).

As a result of these experiences, you will find that I have a tendency to view the AOE differently than force development staff officers.

GENERAL REDUCTIONS AND CONSOLIDATIONS

In going from DIVISION '86 to AOE, a number of reorganizations and consolidations took place to save manpower spaces. Most notable was the combining of three battalions into the main support battalion (MSB). Another was the combination of the DMMC with the HHC of DISCOM. The reduction of the size and capability of the FSB had an impact also. I will cover these three areas in the next few paragraphs and highlight some of their strengths and weaknesses.

MSB Consolidation

The combining of the maintenance, supply & transport and medical battalions into the MSB saved a number of senior command and staff positions, however it placed a great burden on the one remaining battalion commander and his staff. The combining of these diverse functions under one TOE produced a formidable challenge for the MSB commander due to the breath and depth of knowledge and area of responsibility he now must command. The forward support battalion (FSB) commander has similar diverse functional responsibilities but he has a smaller customer population and ground area to support.

While the MSB commander has about three times the personnel of the FSB commander, his span of control

stretchs over six companies instead of just three. Also his supply & service and transport companies must use the same consolidated maintenance and food service platoons. Each of these companies requires a large area to functionally and tactically disperse. With their interdependence on the two most important housekeeping needs, they and the MSB commander significantly lose tactical and operational flexibility. Because of these limitations, I believe that the MSB commander cannot effectively lead- manage, and tactically disperse his battalion.

On a more positive note, one of the main benefits of the MSB was that the FSB's have only one commander and staff to coordinate with when they need back-up support. Likewise, the other battalions in the division have only one instead of three command chains to use to obtain support. While this was beneficial for streamlining coordination of support, I do not believe this advantage will outweigh the difficult internal coordination and control problems in the MSB.

FSB Reductions

The best logistic improvement to the DISCOM and the division under DIVISION '86 was the creation of the FSB. The old forward area support coordinator (FASCO) concept lacked an effective command and control element and always was left wanting for cohesion. With the advent of the AOE FSB, there was an overall reduction of its capabilities

for the brigades and area support. Later, I will discuss in detail some of the functional reductions of the FSB's supply and maintenance capabilities. Generally, with AOE personnel reductions, the DIVISION '86 FSB lost capabilities in maintenance repair; receipt, storage, stockage and issue of all classes of supply; and medical support.

HHC/DMMC Consolidation

One of the better benefits of the AOE was the consolidation of the DISCOM commander's staff with the DMMC. In a division, the logistics planners (G-4 & DISCOM staff), the logistics operators (DISCOM staff & battalions) and the logistics manager (DMMC) must all work closely together with hopefully the same clear guidance. The manager really has the data and subsequently the information the planners and operators need to conduct their mission better. The combination of the prime planning logistics operator and the manager better facilitates timely coordination and cross-fertilization. This is to the direct benefit of the supported customers. From my experience, the DMMC and DISCOM staffs often waste time and energy by independently working on similar projects and problems. The now de facto collocation of the staffs can only help the DISCOM commanders control.

SUPPLY OPERATIONS

Perhaps the single most significant AOE impact on the DISCOM was in the diversified supply arena. Many areas

were affected by the reduction of labor intensive methods and the provision for more efficient materials handling equipment (MHE). The general AOE theme in supply operations was to replace manpower with MHE and to decrease some of the supply tonnage capabilities. Over the next several paragraphs I will address the major classes of supply and some of the impact of AOE on DISCOM supply operations and capabilities.

Class I

With the older "H-Series" TOE we had planned to have the capability to receive, store, issue and distribute a mix of A, B and C rations over different time frames during the battle. The labor intensive A's and to a lesser extent B's required that about 35 DISCOM soldiers were directly involved in this mission. During REFORGER'S and division level field exercises, this group sometimes expanded to bring the total to a minimum of about 45 soldiers. DISCOM soldiers from other less engaged supply operations were required to help because of the increased paperwork accounting and incidence of A ration requirements. Due to lesser requirements in wartime, these supplemental soldiers normally will not be needed.

Under AOE the capability to provide A's and B's in the division was essentially eliminated. It was replaced with a new feeding system that may consist of using 20 to 100 man containerizied, heatable trays. We will still have C's or meals ready to eat (MRE). With the

elimination of the labor intensive A's and B's and with the containerization of the new meals, AOE made it possible to reduce the number of DISCOM ration soldiers to only about 6 or 7 and the number of ration forklifts from four to one. Not only were the soldiers for paperwork significantly reduced at the DMMC, FSB's and MSB, but the soldiers needed for storing, issuing and distributing forward at the FSB's were all but eliminated. Those soldier reductions caused some problems that will only be solved with the addition of soldiers.

Commanders must keep some things in mind as a result of these problems. In peacetime you can count on needing to expand the 6 or 7 soldier force. Regardless of the development of more efficient rations, the probability of having an A-less division field exercise is zero! Therefore, the MSB commander will have to look internally for labor manpower and then turn to the FSB commanders for more manpower support. In peace or in war, if the one forklift goes down or if containerized food (trays or MRE's) is not available, MHE and personnel resources in the DISCOM will have to be moved from less important missions to handle the increased labor intensive ration requirements. You can never forget that during peacetime exercises the one commodity that receives instant and vocal screaming if slightly broken is morale building chow. Until the number of ration break soldiers in the DISCOM is significantly increased, commanders in all units

will feel and express well justified disgust with this part of the AOE.

Class II & IV

The requirement to operate a central issue facility (CIF) in a division is gone. Under AOE, TA 50-901 clothes and equipment are requisitioned by the company supply sergeant like any other II & IV item. Besides the CIF soldier reduction (this was always an MTOE or augmentee authorization anyway), the number of soldiers in the MSB and FSB's remaining II & IV missions was essentially reduced by about a third. This was justified by reducing the size of the authorized stockage list (ASL) and by recalculating what soldiers and MHE can now do more efficiently. Additionally, a computer in the main warehouse interfaced with the main logistics computer in the DMMC. This greatly reduced the need for official paperwork trackers at the warehouse. But, the main AOE impact was the very lack of flexibility to manually track and handle paperwork surges or to do causative research if there was a breakdown in the supply or in the computer systems. Future commanders must be prepared to quickly and judiciously, manually handle only key required critical items. Due to the sensitive nature of small arms and highly pilferable tools, etc., commanders will undoubtedly institute a manual accounting system that will drain the precious little manpower left in this labor intensive operation.

Class III

It is critical that heavy divisions receive their fuel requirements when, where and in the right quantities they need rather than when the supply system can get it to them. Unfortunately, some AOE changes limited the combat commanders fighting range. Through the "H-Series" and DIVISION '86 changes it was recognized that the M1, M2 and M3 would require greater amounts of fuel. Accordingly, about 64 5,000 gallon fuel tankers (34 in S & T and 10 in each FSB) were authorized in the heavy division. Additionally, an initial fuel system supply point (FSSP) of 60,000 gallons for static storage was later increased to 120,000 gallons. Of the approximately 70 man Class III Platoon in the S & T battalion, 21 soldiers in the POL Storage Section engaged in operating the FSSP, two forward area refueling equipment (FARE) systems and in handling the division's POL package products for ground mobility. The remainder of the platoon had about 44 drivers for the 34 5,000 gallon tankers.

Under AOE a number of equipment and significant personnel changes took place that put a premium on soldier maturity and skill. The size of the POL Storage Section was reduced from about 21 to 9 soldiers with an increase in equipment and storage capability. It takes about 7 soldiers to operate an FSSP safely and effectively. This left two soldiers to operate two FARE systems and to

receive, store and issue package products. There are a few challenges here when operating on a daily basis, let alone operating on a 24-hour basis. We will have problems when there is a requirement for emergency aerial resupply using a FARE system. Normally it takes three rather than one soldier to do this mission. This severely impacts the FSSP operation. Also, with only 9 soldiers in this section, you lose your FSSP operation for at least a day when you have to break it down, deploy it and erect it again. While we have good equipment capability, the lack of adequate personnel now decreases our flexibility and ability to operate and to displace in a reasonable time frame.

AOE made changes to the number of tractors and drivers for the fuel tankers by reducing both. Under AOE, the MSB lost 8 tractors in going from 34 to 26 (FSB's retained 10 each). This meant that 8 highly mobile tankers were now precariously spotted on the battlefield. Also, drivers were allocated on a basis of 1.3 times the number of tractors. AOE reduced that to one time. The basic problem was that some drivers will have two tankers and a tractor to maintain and if he or one of his fellow soldiers goes on leave, hospital, R&R or a similiar absence you rapidly lose refuel capability and maintainability.

While there were grade reductions in most DISCOM TOE's, this POL platoon took what I consider an unwise

risk. There were three E-7's in this approximately 70 soldier DIVISION '86 platoon---a platoon sergeant, a POL storage section chief and a POL distribution section chief. Because of the diverse nature and independent operation of the two sections it took the maturity and skill of an E-7 to operate these sections. Under AOE we now have one E-7 platoon sergeant, two E-6 section leaders and E-5 vice E-6 squad leaders. Aside from the fact that the senior leadership was downgraded, I find it very difficult for most E-5's to care for, know about, and effectively employ a 11 tanker, 9 tractor squad over one third of the division rear area. This will be a real challenge when you consider that he was also one of the nine drivers.

Commanders will have to give up flexibility in the timing of their forward POL deliveries and have to move forward in larger, more vulnerable groups. With limited manpower and a constant demand for fuel, commanders may want to consider reducing other transport capabilities in order to make sure that all 5,000 gallon fuel tankers have a driver and tractor at all times. The requirement to surge fuel forward is a reality in heavy divisions. This AOE organization will not allow you to effectively surge and keep a reasonable flow of fuel to the division.

Class V

DIVISION '86 and AOE both incorporated ammunition transfer points (ATP) in the DISCOM. It was envisioned

that as much as 500 stons of high demand, bulky ammunition would move through each of the division's four ATP's. One ATP was in support of the division rear area and three others normally were in support of each brigade. This concept essentially placed ATP paper managers in the DMMC and ammunition humpers in the S & T (MSB under AOE) and FSB's. These elements combined to form ATP's as needed. The concept and original organization was very beneficial to artillery and armor battalions. Again because of the need to reduce people, the ATP's were cut in manpower, equipment and correspondingly in tonnage capability. Essentially each ATP lost half of the above. While the ATP was losing capability with AOE revisions, combat units' support platoons were also losing drivers and trucks that normally would go to the ATP and ammunition supply point. This combined reduction still produces more capability than without ATP's. But, we have lost a real quantifiable, timely supply multiplier for the divisional combat units.

Class VII

Under AOE there were very few changes that significantly impacted the major item receipt, processing, accounting and issue operations in the division. The major impact was a reduction of personnel throughout the various management and operational units in DISCOM. In the future more reliance will have to be placed on the receiving units quickly picking up the items and greater

assistance will be needed from them during retrograde and turn-in of these major items.

MAINTENANCE AND CLASS IX OPERATIONS

While I believe there were some very important impacts in the supply arena as a result of AOE, we found that in the maintenance and its closely related Class IX supply operation the impact was not as great, and in some cases, a good improvement. I will briefly discuss the following areas: Class IX, ground maintenance, missile and aviation maintenance.

Class IX

Under DIVISION '86 and AOE the Class IX operation in the maintenance and main support battalions respectively, was reduced in manpower and equipment similar to the Class II, IV & VII operations. The main result was a reduced capability to handle a large authorizied stockage list (ASL). In the future this operation or ASL will be more mobile but the division will have a greater reliance on the management skill and stockage levels obtained from corps support. The DISCOM commander will have to plan for more frequent interruptions in the supply system and more items will become critical as the ASL size remains small, as the pipeline lengthens and as modern equipment continues to become more sophisticated. Under AOE we moved to a greater reliance on the replacement of parts by maintenance personnel rather than fixing or the repair of the parts. As a result, the management, stocking and

distribution of repair parts became more time sensitive and critical. The channel to corps and higher support units must be shortened and must be used more frequently if we are to continue to provide timely Class IX support.

Ground Maintenance

A significant improvement for the combat units was gained when armor and mechanized maintenance support teams (MST) were placed in the DISCOM maintenance units. We identified the need and benefit of structuring small, technically qualified teams to go forward to repair combat units equipment While this concept was initially part of DIVISION '86, AOE refined and added more equipment to the teams. Some of this equipment was direly needed radios for command and control and trucks to make the teams almost self-contained and fully mobile.

There was an overall reduction in the total number of mechanics in all the DS support units, however it does appear that the small number of reductions was reasonable based on projected workloads. However, over time we will have to refine the impact of these reductions and if needed, clearly document increased manpower requirements with supportable evidence.

Missile and Aviation Maintenance

I am grouping these together because I only have two comments to make about them. The first is that while the aviation brigade with the division's air fleet was being formed with the left hand, its old organic DS

(intermediate) maintenance support company was being given to the DISCOM with the right hand. This only added to the DISCOM commander's span of control and only added to the aviation brigade commander's coordination problems. I believe everyone lost on this shortsighted and perhaps political move. For this area to be successful, both commanders will need to recognize the absurdity of any command parochialism and work together to get the mission done in spite of the new organizational lines.

The second comment deals with the lack of capability or redundancy in the missile maintenance area. Under AOE, missile and radar repairmen were reduced in number to what I consider an unacceptable risk level. We now ask fewer soldiers to effectively cover more rear area with less repair equipment and with the same workload. If one of these soldiers is sick, not there or untrained, the division's chances for this timely and possibly critical repair area being ready to meet the mission is slim to none. While there are initiatives to correct this risky situation, it is an indication of another area that lost personnel spaces without an informed consideration of the required flexibility to perform this mission on more than one place on the battlefield. Future commanders must pay particular attention to making sure these low density repairmen are present and qualified.

Now that I have covered the last major technical mission of the DISCOM, I would like to address an area

that received a lot of attention. While rear area operations has always been difficult and tough to accomplish for logisticians, the successful execution of this mission plays an integral part in our Air-Land Battle doctrine.

REAR AREA OPERATIONS

One of the more difficult operations that a DISCOM must perform is to effectively and judiciously conduct rear area operations. There are many challenges to overcome and they include additional tactical training, proficiency with crew served weapons, training of non-combat leaders, equipment and communication means and doctrinal command and control of the rear area. Obviously, the first problem is to train logisticians and their leaders in the not so traditional role of being a combat infantryman. This is not too difficult as all soldiers normally learn many individual basics through their common skills and field training exercises conducted in all divisional units. The collective training required involves squad and platoon patrolling and setting up basic ambushes. Beyond this force size your normal DISCOM unit cannot function as a viable offensive force. Also, you begin to enter the area of a Level III threat which normally will be engaged by a divisional rifle or armor company assigned the mission of responding to rear area actions.

While it may not be too difficult to reorient your

training to include conducting small unit infantry tactics, it is imperative that you have some organic firepower to carry out your rear area mission. AOE provided 50 caliber machine guns (M2) in reasonable numbers, more M60 machine guns and more machine gun truck mounts. Even though some mission truck drivers now have to maintain a machine gun in addition to their truck and trailer, they have significantly more defensive and offensive firepower available. I believe the time required for additional maintenance and weapon skill qualifications is more than offset by the additional firepower gained. To help solve the crew served weapon training problem, leaders at all levels will have to recognize and plan for the additional time requirement. One way to help this problem is to train by doubling up on ranges with combat and combat support units.

Another of the significant benefits of AOE to combat service support units was the addition of more radios to the TOE's. An example of this was the addition of radios to maintenance support teams, fuel tanker squads and generally in all headquarters elements. This overall improvement to command and control permitted more DISCOM elements the capability to report enemy activity and to request artillery or other fire support in a timely and effective manner for rear area operations. With more radios in the DISCOM headquarters, a net redundancy and expansion capability now exists. Under the old TOE's, it

was virtually impossible to establish a separate rear area operations center (RAOC) net. If something significant happened, the command net had to become the rear area operations center net and normal command traffic would have to go by the slower and less responsive wire net. If any DISCOM elements were moving during this time, they would either wait for the RAOC action to be over or send a messenger with their traffic. It all boiled down to a less than satisfactory situation. Because of AOE, that problem has a good possibility of staying fixed.

SUMMARY

Having covered the main topics where the AOE has affected the DISCOM, we can see that the logistics capability in direct support of the division has been reduced. While some of this reduced support has been moved back to the corps level, there still has been an erosion of capability. Considering the continued modernization of the Army and its accompanying demand for more supplies and sophisticated repair, DISCOM commanders will have to be more prudent with less resources. In the area of organizational consolidations and reductions we will have to unemotionally document required equipment and personnel needs and use the force development system to make changes. In the area of supply, we will have less manpower for managing, storing and distributing fuel and food. More use of MHE is a key. In the maintenance area we will have to rely on corps stocking more repair parts,

fixing more assemblies and sending items forward more responsively. More steadfastness in keeping the division's ASL's and PLL's small and mobile is a key. In the case of rear area operations we should be able to do our mission better than in the past.

While there are many who blame the problems of AOE on the creation of the light divisions, I have deliberately avoided this argument. I fully believe that we can and should be healthy skeptics on this subject. But, it is more important to recognize the reality of the situation and get on with our main task of using old or new ways to shrewdly employ our given resources. If we are to support the combat soldier, and given the current AOE, we must take more risks and be more flexible in setting and changing our truely important priorities.

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